



July 22, 2019

Adam Day, Chairman  
California State University  
Board of Trustees  
401 Golden Shore  
Long Beach, CA 90802

Peter J. Taylor, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy  
CSU Board of Trustees  
1 Golden Shore  
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Mr. Day and Mr. Taylor:

On behalf of the California School Boards Association (CSBA), which represents nearly 1,000 school district and county boards of education statewide, I am writing to express concerns regarding the proposed expansion of the a-g requirements that determine minimal eligibility for admission to the California State University at the Board of Trustees meeting July 23-24, 2019.

According to the background information provided in Item 5 of the Committee on Educational Policy Agenda – “One of the greatest academic hurdles to college degree attainment is a lack of the fundamental skills associated with quantitative reasoning. Too often, equity gaps are exacerbated by quantitative reasoning disparities in PK-12 schools that follow students to college and influence their academic and career options. Increased preparation in quantitative reasoning supports success in the first year of college and creates more equitable opportunity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics – collectively known as STEM – majors and careers.”

The Committee’s potential proposal would require incoming freshman, beginning with class of 2026, to complete one additional course of quantitative reasoning to meet the minimum qualifications for admission to the California State University (CSU). The requirement could be fulfilled through high school coursework in mathematics, science or an elective course with a quantitative reasoning foundation. Students could also meet the requirement with some Career and Technical Education courses or with appropriate dual enrollment courses at a local community college.

The agenda states that this proposal would not be intended to curtail access or change the composition of the CSU student population. Instead, it is intended to ensure that all students who enter the CSU are prepared to be successful in their coursework and participate in a range of majors and career fields.

CSBA is supportive of ensuring that all students are prepared to succeed upon entering CSU. However, this proposal raises several logistical and implementation issues for high schools throughout the state along with concerns for student enrollment.

The background documentation provides that CSU’s approach to this new admission requirement has been informed by ongoing consultation and collaboration with a diverse range of constituents and community partners. However, in the documentation provided there appears to be little consideration for the ability of school districts throughout the state to implement this proposal and provide appropriate access to all students.

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CSBA is also concerned that this proposal unfairly disadvantages low-income and English learner students who are already underrepresented in A-G completion rates, all at a time when local schools are having difficulty finding qualified math teachers.

The current math entrance requirement for the state's universities is three years for CSU and three years (with four years recommended) for entrance into the University of California (UC). The higher standard proposed in this agenda item would exceed the requirements of the UC Board of Regents, which could result in students being excluded from the CSU system.

Finally, this proposal poses a question to the greater issue of school funding: Will high schools have the resources to ensure that *all* students have the access to these courses, and will schools have the resources to ensure that *all* students can succeed in current or proposed A-G requirements?

The agenda item states that that a formal proposal has not yet been written, but following a special convening of the Committee on Educational Policy on August 29, 2019 devoted to this topic, a formal proposal would then be brought before the Board of Trustees as an information item during the September 2019 meeting and as an action item during the November 2019 meeting.

CSBA would strongly urge that, before any final decisions are made or a proposal is formally developed, the committee and the Board of Trustees expand the list of those who have been consulted to include statewide educational organizations and a variety of school districts, not just school sites. There needs to be more in-depth conversations regarding the ability of school districts to increase appropriate course offerings for high school students to meet this requirement and to further look at the implications for student enrollment at CSU.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns when this issue is discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting, and we look forward to future conversations as this issue goes forward.

If you have questions regarding our position, please feel free to contact Dennis Meyers, Assistant Executive Director of Governmental Relations or myself at (916) 371-4691. We can also be reached by email at [dmeyers@csba.org](mailto:dmeyers@csba.org) or [ehoffman@csba.org](mailto:ehoffman@csba.org).

Sincerely,



Erika K. Hoffman  
Legislative Advocate  
Office of Governmental Relations

cc: Members, CSU Board of Trustees